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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of: Sergio Abrignani

Serial No.: Not yet assigned

Group Art Unit: Not yet assigned

Filed: Herewith

Examiner: Not yet assigned

For: **BINDING PROTEIN**

EXPRESS MAIL LABEL NO: EL650 273 428US

DATE OF DEPOSIT: January 5, 2001

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Prior to examination on the merits, please amend the above-identified application as follows.

In the claims:

~~Please cancel claims 11 and 12 without prejudice.~~

Please insert the following claims:

Sub E
B
N 21. A method for treating a patient infected with hepatitis C virus (HCV) comprising administering to said patient an amount of a protein having a molecular weight of about 24 kd, or a functionally equivalent variant or fragment thereof, and capable of binding to E2 of HCV, effective to reduce the infectivity of the virus.

22. A composition comprising a protein having a molecular weight of about 24 kd, or a functionally equivalent variant or fragment thereof, and capable of binding to E2 of HCV, in